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WHAT A 'LITTLE BIRD' (OR TWO) HAS TOLD ME ABOUT HIMSELF.

ANY one who has been tempted to indulge in a good country ramble, on one of those fine days—so calm, serene, and beautiful—with which we are sometimes favoured towards the end of October, must have been struck with surprise at the unusual silence that prevails around. The most superficial observer of the common objects of the country—which can be made so uncommonly interesting to those who will hear and see—cannot have failed to notice, and lament, the absence of those familiar voices which, but a very short time ago, were wont to make the woods and valleys vocal with their melodies. The glad full chorus that attended his footsteps during a corresponding walk in May, has gradually declined in volume, until, with rare exceptions, it has dwindled into a solo by Mr Cockrobin, whose broken, and somewhat melancholy strain, with its fitful intervals of silence, is not unlike an attempt to sing an elaborate air from some oratorio without the necessary accompaniment. How is this? Why should spring have so many jubilant anthems chanted in her praise, and autumn be almost destitute of music?

It is true that many of our sweet singers, with an instinctive dread of the severity of an English winter, have winged their mysterious flight to sunnier and far-distant lands. The blackcap, the twittering swallow, and the fussy little white-throat (whose song is said by some authorities to rival that of the nightingale, and by others, to be harsh and unpleasant, so much do doctors differ), have departed. Many of the finest of our feathered musicians, however, still remain, but have altogether lost the power or the disposition to chant. There is the thrush, for instance, the prince of our northern songsters, with his brown back and finely speckled breast, living a much wilder life now than he did when encumbered with the cares of a rising family. He holds his whiskered bill well up in the air, and has an expression of astonishment in his widely opened eyes, as if he was always 'quite surprised at meeting you here;' but his magnificent song, as remarkable for its amazing power, as for the variety and suddenness of its transitions, is now no longer heard echoing through the valley. There is the blackbird, with his glossy clerical suit—grown somewhat rusty—and his bright yellow bill—'golden dagger,' as

Tennyson, thinking of his stabbed fruit, appropriately terms it; but his rich mellow music—distinguishable from that of the thrush by being mostly pitched in a lower key, by less abruptness, and by an apparent want of freedom in delivery, as if he had got a small *pea* under his tongue, or had some other impediment in his speech that prevented a free articulation—his noble voice—the baritone among birds—has left him. He still gives vent occasionally to that loud laugh-like screech of his, when suddenly startled, and when flitting from bush to bush—with his tail spread out like a fan—which may have been the Rev. Gilbert White's reason for classing him among the birds that sing on the wing. There are plenty of larks, too, flying about, in small family groups, preparatory to gathering into large winter-flocks, but none of them seem to be ambitious to be taken for that

Ethereal minstrel, pilgrim of the sky!
that Wordsworth mentions, which is said to be

Type of the wise who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of Heaven and home.

Except now and then giving utterance to a sharp 'chirrup, chirrup,' as they chase each other in anger or in sport, they now are silent. There is the smart little chaffinch, too, fraternising with his late antagonists, and hopping about our country roads, to which he seems to be extremely partial. Though deserted by his faithless wife, he is apparently as active and as busy as ever. Still, his dapper summer-coat has now lost much of its gloss, as if the first shock of grief at the flighty conduct of his partner, and mother of his family, had literally taken the shine out of him, and left him with the seedy, broken-down look of one who has seen better days. If he retains much of his animation, he has altogether forgotten that cheerful but rather monotonous ditty of his, which, beginning on a high note, came rattling down the scale to an abrupt finish. Even the melancholy yellowhammer now forgets to pipe his little lay; he no longer sits like a beggar by the roadside, pitifully bewailing his condition, informing passers-by in plaintive tones that he has 'very little bread, and no che-ese.'

This singular silence on the part of our native warblers at one season, compared with their volubility at another, has always been a puzzle to naturalists. Some have attempted to account for it

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on physical grounds, thinking it probable there might be some natural obstruction, such as contraction or rigidity of the larynx. That such can hardly be the case is shewn, not only by the fact that we have some birds that sing in winter, but also by the fact, that the Germans, by various cruel methods, succeed in making their favourite the chaffinch—exclusively a spring songster naturally—pipe his merry notes in autumn too. The poets—who, as usual, have carried the general public along with them—have mostly held stoutly to the belief, that love is at once the inspiration and the burden of all birdish melody; that each impassioned lay is neither more nor less than a genuine love-song: 'Love gave it energy, love gave it birth.' As birds indulge the tender passion during a part of the year only, their silence during the remainder is thus easily explained. This is a pleasant and highly poetic belief, but one with which the outdoor naturalist, who, according to White, is 'one who takes his observations from the subject itself, and not from the writings of others,' will not be disposed to coincide. He will be much more likely to agree with that accurate observer of nature at first hand, when he declares that, 'during the amorous season, such a jealousy prevails between the male birds, that they can hardly bear to be together in the same hedge or field. Most of the singing and elation of spirits at that time seem to me to be the effect of rivalry and emulation, and it is to this spirit of jealousy that I chiefly attribute the equal dispersion of birds in the spring over the face of the country.' This assertion of one having authority, which knocks the rose-pink out of many an 'elegant extract,' and reduces the sweet love-songs of the grove into a kind of melodious Billingsgate, will be generally verified by observation. The crowing of the common domestic cock—which is his 'easy method' of singing, and which, when once fairly learned, is always the same, but is nevertheless perfectly original, no two ever crowing exactly alike—is evidently intended for the ear of his antagonist on the adjoining dunghill, rather than for that of dear Dame Partlett, or the prim Miss Pullet at his side, towards whom he adopts a very different tone. So, if some fine evening you listen attentively to the wonderfully varied music of the thrush, perched, it may be, on the spire of the village church, or on the topmost twig of the parson's poplars—for he loves a lofty perch when singing—you will probably conclude it is more a challenge and defiance of some saucy rival at a distance, by whom he is regularly answered, than it is an expression of tenderness and attachment to his mate in the bush close by, who is patiently engaged in her tedious process of making young mouths, that will soon be clamorous to be filled.

Confirmatory of this bird-Billingsgate theory, it is well known that many, indeed most of our wild warblers, are only rivals and singers during a part of the year, and that their songs and rivalry begin and end together. The males of any locality who have been in a state of open war in spring, will probably form part of the same flock, and live together in peace and silence over winter. Those who do continue their song, also continue their opposition. Familiar instances of these two classes are furnished by the redbreast and the chaffinch. About the time when nearly all other birds agree to sink their differences, and say no more about them for a while, the hatred of the robin towards all his race seems to acquire additional force, and his songs additional vigour. Though he has generally been classed among the very few birds that sing all the year round, yet the shy and comparatively silent bird, hopping about the hedge-bottoms in secluded corners, in the vicinity of his nest, in summer, is nothing like the same bird in October, piping from the chimney-top a clear defiance against all red-breasted comers. His notes at this time are said by some to have a tone of melancholy

about them, a plaintive sadness not discernible at any other season. Still, judging by results, the poet can hardly be said to 'hold the mirror up to nature,' when he says:

List the robin's plaintive ditty,
Perched on yonder blossomed sloe;
He sings of love, and woe, and pity,
Pity, love, and woe.

Perhaps he does, to the listening poet; but to the listening robin—who may reasonably be expected to be better acquainted with the language—he sings of something very different, something, indeed, of the nature of an insult, provocative of a reply, equally plaintive, which is oftener than otherwise the prelude to a desperate engagement. Whatever can be the cause of this general favourite's excessive hostility to all his own kind, is a mystery. Love is out of the question at a season when the tender passion is never indulged; besides, he attacks all indiscriminately, without regard to age or sex. Neither can it spring from a desire to preserve his feeding-ground free from intrusion, for then he would drive off other small birds as well. Though never on very intimate terms with them, yet he will feed quietly with the piebald wagtail, the tame hedge-warbler, and others, and is extremely polite in making way for that self-assertive individual with the murderous nursery reputation, the sparrow, who has evidently not acquired his shocking bad character for nothing, the bold fellow daring to dispute the precedence with him, soon feeling the weight of his thick heavy bill.

Let another redbreast appear upon the scene, however, and it has the same effect on Mr Robin that a red rag is proverbially said to have upon a turkey-cock. It does not matter how near the family relationship may be between the two, when they meet, there is no alternative but to fight or fly. It may be only their 'love' and 'pity' for each other; but if it is their method of shewing it, it is something like that in vogue at Donnybrook Fair, where

Pat meets wid his friend, and for *love* knocks him down
Wid his sprig o' shillalah and shamrock so green.

Are the tuneful combatants, ever ready for a row, we see about our dwellings towards the end of autumn, all males? or do the females assume for a time the song, the swagger, and the pugnacious spirit of their mates? Let us hope, for the credit of the feminine character, that they follow the example of their friends the lady-chaffinches, and retire to more peaceful quarters, leaving the gentlemen to fight their quarrels out among themselves.

Very different to the protracted vindictiveness of the robin is the policy pursued by the chaffinch. Though one of the most violent of our little feathered pugilists during the breeding season—when he is also the most indelible of our native singers—he is one of the first to forget his song and to forgive his enemies. The male birds, who at one period could not meet without a battle, will, towards the fall of the year, affect each other's society, and live together very amicably. This, however, if they are fond of company, may not be so much a matter of choice as of necessity, large numbers of the females having gathered themselves together and gone in search of more congenial quarters, leaving their husbands and sons behind them, who have, in consequence, been called 'bachelors.' Whether they actually leave their country, or remain in the south of England, where vast flocks of hens are sometimes seen late in the year, appears to be somewhat doubtful. I was at first inclined to believe that this reported migration of the hens only might have arisen from the greater resemblance the sexes bear to each other in winter than they do in summer. The finery of the cock becomes a good deal faded: he loses the bright shady hues of his neck, which glittered in the

summer-sun as if the feathers were all tipped with jewels; and he is almost reduced to the dingy plainness of his modestly attired mate. Still, the difference between the two is sufficiently obvious to prevent mistakes; and as the separation of the sexes is by no means a complete one, there is always opportunity for comparison. I have noticed, too, that the proportion of hen-birds in a flock is always greater during hard frost or snow than when the weather is moderately mild. Notwithstanding his lively manner and his cheerful music, the chaffinch has never been a particular favourite in England—seldom being thought worthy of a cage, or of that place in our households so frequently occupied by some of his congeners. But in Germany, he holds a very different position. There, the chaffinch is as much esteemed for his song as an over-finely bred Belgian canary is among our English 'Fancy' for his senseless shape. Dr Bechstein, in a note to his admirable *Natural History of Cage-birds*, says: 'Ruhl is a large manufacturing village in Thuringia, the inhabitants of which, mostly cutlers, have such a passion for chaffinches, that some have gone ninety miles from home to take with bird-lime one of these birds distinguished by its song, and have given one of their cows for a fine songster; from which has arisen their common expression, *such a chaffinch is worth a cow*. A common workman will give a *louis d'or* (sixteen shillings) for a chaffinch he admires, and willingly live on bread and water to gain the money. An amateur cannot hear one that sings in a superior style *The Double Trill of the Harz* without being in an ecstasy. I have heard them say that one which sings this melody perfectly, certainly can converse from its pronouncing the syllables so distinctly.'

The same author gives an elaborate description of eight of the many different varieties into which his enthusiastic countrymen have succeeded in dividing the songs of the chaffinch. Some of these melodies are subdivided again into four, and sometimes six varieties of different degrees of excellence; the bird that is able to sing perfectly *The Double Trill of the Harz*, which is composed of six strains, ending in the word *Weingeh*, or vinegay, being considered a prodigy. These subtle divisions of the music of one of our commonest wild-birds, who with us is reckoned 'no great shakes' as a singer, may appear fanciful enough to canary-loving Englishmen; but no one can help admiring the careful study and the nice musical ear necessary to discover so many shades of difference in the whistling of a common chaffinch. Should these particulars appear to some to be rather trivial, let us hope that others may be induced by them to take rather more interest than they have hitherto done in the smart little fellow, with the coat of many colours, hopping about our country walks, who, in return for their kindly notice, will not object to act the part of a living barometer, by giving warning of approaching rain.

The amateur-ornithologist, when taking his walks abroad in the land, in autumn and in winter, if he is not enlivened with the sweet music of his numerous feathered acquaintances, is never left altogether without amusement. If there is no longer their melodious conversation to listen to, and interpret, birds have other points of interest, the study of which, if not quite so engaging, will not be without profit. A very moderate practice will soon enable any one to distinguish many birds by their flight alone, long before they are near enough to do so by their shape and colour. Observation will discover almost as many peculiarities in their methods of locomotion, on the ground and in the air, as there is in their voices or their plumage. A group of small birds hopping about the yard or garden on a winter's day, in search of a stray seed or two, will disclose many points of difference in their gait, which a casual observer would never notice. Others that have the same way of moving over the ground, differ very

materially in their passage through the air. The starling, the skylark, and the wagtail always run or walk when on the land—the last-named being the smallest of our walking birds—yet they all three differ much in their manner of flying. Starlings, who are always in a prodigious hurry, move steadily and rapidly along with regular strokes of the wing, in a kind of swimming motion, which, as they often fly together in considerable numbers, enables them to keep pretty close to each other. Skylarks have a fluttering uncertain manner, that gives to a flock in winter a somewhat confused and straggling appearance. Wagtails, who never move in very large companies, have a much more eccentric movement, passing through the air in a series of irregular bounds or curves, rising and falling gracefully, and every now and then giving vent to a sharp chirp, which appears to be their only attempt at music. They have a bold, confident style of flying, without any of that strange indecision which characterises the higher flights of some of our small birds, who, when startled to a greater height than usual, jerk about from side to side, as if utterly unable to make up their minds which way to steer. If the wagtail cannot be very highly recommended as a teacher of music, there is no bird better able to give lessons in agility. To watch him about the month of September, when he leaves the solitary water-courses he has haunted during summer, and takes to the fields in which cattle are grazing—to see him running about the nose of some old horse or cow, with whom he has a perfect understanding, and witness the marvellous dexterity with which he seizes his prey, is a treat, and a display of activity no mountebank can match.

If the birds already mentioned are not sufficient or interesting enough to engage the attention of our country rambler, let him, for a change, wend his way by the margin of some sluggish, unfrequented stream, and compare the slow but stately movements of the hungry heron with the dart-like rapidity of the snipe, or the heavy laboured flight of the wild-duck, with its head stretched forth as if for balance; and if, with such a variety of entertainment, he still returns unsatisfied, his appetite for feathered novelty must be indeed prodigious.

ETIQUETTE.

A CERTAIN weekly review, in one of those beautiful articles upon social life for which it is so justly celebrated, once deigned to notice the *Autobiography of a Bagman*. The reviewer, accustomed, as usual, to mingle only with persons of the very first rank, and sitting, as it were, upon a cloud, above the tumult of the working-world, was so good as to allow that it was doubtful, after all, whether the middle classes (inclusive of Irish peers, baronets, and the borough members) did not enjoy life, upon the whole, as much as himself and other persons moving in the highest circles. 'There must be much vulgarity, of course,' said he (or words to that effect) 'in this class of creatures, but their rude pleasures are numerous, and they do not seem to be bound hand and foot, as we are, by the golden chains of etiquette.' There were many other lovely sentences, the precise terms of which I forget, but the whole essay had exactly the effect upon me which it was doubtless intended to have; I stood, as it seemed, a long way off, with downcast eyes, and thought how good it was of so great a man to contribute to periodical literature, and especially how graceful was his disavowal of any superiority in his high position, as respected the enjoyment of life. I thought this last was only affected by the writer out of delicacy (for which the paper with which he was connected is famous), in order to console persons like myself—in a humble position of life—for their low estate; but I have since come to the conclusion that, whether he meant to do so or not, he spoke the truth.

I have now in my custody (for it is only lent, alas!) a charming volume (bound in violet and gold), called *Court Etiquette*, and I wish, with all my heart, that I had possessed it earlier; for so should I have been preserved from much dissatisfaction with my own rank in the world, as well as envy of kings, princes, peers, and others of similar condition. My disenchantment is the more complete, since the author of the work in question is himself a great admirer of what he describes, and would encourage me to immolate myself upon the very altar of which he is a minister. He would adjure me to make an effort to improve my present position, which he points out as little less than degrading. In the Tables of Precedence, there are no less than one hundred and twenty-eight classes, and I find myself in the *hundred-and-twenty-third* (!), immediately after Subalterns in the Army. '123. Professional gentlemen—as solicitors, attorneys, proctors, engineers, architects, medical practitioners (not being physicians), artists, *literary men*, merchants, master-manufacturers, scientific professors, and others not engaged in manual labour, farming of land, or retail trade.' The wife of an ensign in a marching regiment would therefore be taken down to dinner before mine!

I am not to comfort myself, says the stern editor of this volume, with the idea that these things are regulated by any passing conventional arrangement, for that is a notion 'which can only exist among those who have everything to learn upon this subject;' I am not to conceive that precedence is 'a fantastic thing, ruled by the fluctuating laws of fashionable life;' or a useless thing, 'to be discarded by all persons of common sense who have the necessary courage;' or a modern institution, 'intended to act as a bulwark to the titled classes.' No; this system rests upon the authority of acts of parliament, solemn decisions in courts of justice, and public instruments proceeding from the crown. The Romans, I am reminded, by a special law in the Theodosian code, actually made it *sacrilège* for any person, even inadvertently, to take the seat belonging to another; while by one of the laws of Canute, a person sitting above his station was to be pelted out of his place with stones.

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark! what discord follows.

It is no wonder, however, that I was in ignorance of many of these weighty matters. 'The Man of the World'—under which *nom de plume* some eminent personage has condescended to edit this volume—assures us, in the beginning, that *Court Etiquette* has never before been written upon by any one who is acquainted with the subject. How is it possible that persons in the hundred-and-twenty-third class of precedence can write about Levées, Drawing-rooms, and Audiences (all very different matters, be it observed), without even the privilege of the *Entrée*? 'By *inference*, the author of that article which appears in the newspapers under the head of the Court Circular, is allowed to stand near the windows in the Tapestry Chamber, and he is permitted to copy the cards which have been left on the table of the Queen's Page. In this imperfect and unauthorised way, the public at large gain the only knowledge they possess respecting the persons present at Drawing-rooms, Levées, Courts, and Audiences.' The stern exclusiveness of the writer of that sentence is truly admirable, and in these levelling modern days, has scarce a parallel, except in the writer in the weekly review above referred to. From internal evidence, indeed, I have come to the conclusion, that the 'Man of the World' and the Reviewer in question are one and the same persons. Each is obviously a man of rank; each is tenacious of his hereditary social privileges; each indulges in a cynical philosophy, which does not spare even the very class which he upholds. 'The Fashionable World,' admits my

editor, 'is at once despotic and servile, mean and ambitious, precise and whimsical; it opens not its doors to wealth, though it shuts them upon poverty; it admits not nobility, but it spurns low birth; ignorance is no disqualification, learning no advantage. . . . Still, it is highly useful to a state that there shall be one band of men at least—a solid, impregnable square, erecting its haughty standards in courts and palaces, to shew the man of money there is something he cannot buy, to shew the man of land that there is something he cannot grow, to shew the man of title there is something he cannot inherit, and to shew the democrat there is something he cannot pilfer.' If this is not fine writing, I know not what can deserve that title; and it suggests to my mind nothing less than a vision of the late Samuel Johnson in a court costume, stolen from his enemy, Lord Chesterfield.

Our Man of the World, however eminent he be, is not, I conceive, himself a peer; there are certain remarks of his which betray a decided leaning towards that portion of the aristocracy which do not possess seats in the Upper House. 'The House of Lords is only a small section of the aristocracy, and includes among its members only a portion of the peerage. . . . There are upwards of one hundred-and-thirty-seven peers—genuine Peers—who have no seats whatever.* And again: 'That great body called the aristocracy would scarcely exhibit a sensible diminution of its members if the whole Peerage were engulfed in an earthquake.' Let us escape from this awful thought into the presence of royalty.

In his sublime contempt for the general public, and his sense of their lack of all great social opportunities, our editor has entitled his chapter upon behaviour in the presence of kings, '*Accidental Intercourse with Royalty*;' whereby he means, not the meeting a monarch in a narrow lane, and apologising for driving over him, but the exhibiting to him some manufactory, doing the honours of some public entertainment, or explaining some invention of one's own to his royal ear; in trying circumstances of that character, says our monitor, 'having heard some loose details of Court Ceremonials, people know not whether to bow, to kneel, or to run away!' For the comfort of these uneducated persons, 'it will be desirable to state, that on such occasions their chief duty will be to remain with uncovered head whether it rains, hails, or shines, and to restrain all attempts at speech except in reply to questions.' Now, if this be really the case, would it not be better for delicate persons (unless in very fine weather), and for talkative persons (at all times) to be uneducated, and to run away? 'If presented by name, it will be necessary to bow twice, the second salutation being made to follow immediately upon the acknowledging bow of royalty, of which it is intended as a dutiful expression of thanks.' With respect to foreign princes, our editor gives us no information as to posture, but, judging by what they expect in other matters, we should think it but right to approach them upon all-fours. 'The attendants of Foreign Princes are in the habit of keeping close to the Royal Personage, waiting upon every glance, and not presuming to notice any person or anything [such as the moon?] except that which happens at the instant to be under the observation of their prince.' There must be some credit, as Mark Tapley would say, to courtiers who are jolly under such circumstances as these.

It seems, however, that in the best circles—even when not regal—conversation is by no means too sprightly and natural. Whoever aims at success in good society, says our mentor, gravely, must abstain from general reflections upon classes or orders of men, for though none of your auditors may actually belong to the set in question, some one is sure to be

* In the House of Lords, that is. There is, of course, no such physical defect (whatever the Radicals may say) by which a lord may be recognised.

too closely connected with them to make your remarks agreeable. 'We find, therefore, that cliques, coteries, nations, sects, professions, and even clubs, are too sacred to be meddled with by the man who desires to be well received.' These exceptions must rather narrow the field of fashionable conversation.

Again: 'Abstain from reasoning—you must eschew logic. It will be "Greek" to the women,* for few of them can follow out the briefest and neatest demonstration. . . . Abstain from anecdote, unless it be fresh, short, pointed, appropriate, and of application evident to the stupidest member of the corporation of dunces, else it will fail in good society. . . . Abstain from speaking of your own profession, and in fact about anything that may interest yourself. . . . Abstain from appearing indifferent; whatever is good enough for other persons to say, is good enough for you to hear. Learn the art of being interested in everybody's twaddle. . . . Abstain, above all things, from any species of wit that can dazzle and offend; the pettiest attempts at wit must excite envy if innocent, and enmity if sarcastic. . . . Abstain from speaking Toryism, Whiggism, Radicalism, Puseyism, Evangelism, or even Church of Englandism. . . . Abstain as much as possible from criticism of modern works in literature, science, or art. The friends of the author or artist may be at your elbow, and irritated by blame, or his rivals be there, and offended by praise. . . . Abstain from confessing any peculiarity of taste, but rather admire and condemn according to the intellect, taste, and acquirements of your company. You will fall out of the social sphere if you rise above or sink below the level of the commonest intelligence. . . . Abstain—abstain—abstain—such is the beginning, the middle, and the end of every injunction.

Thus he who would stand well with good society must be a total abstainer as to conversation, or confine himself to the Weather and the—no, not the Crops, for that may offend the Manufacturing Interest. Yet you must talk, and that at considerable length, for 'all abbreviations are marks of under-breeding carefully to be avoided.' I do not know at what period this admirable volume was published; for being, I suppose, intended for all Time, it bears no date, but this last fashionable statute must have fallen into desuetude; otherwise, such a phrase as 'I thank you,' would not be cut down to 'Thanks,' in every young lady's mouth, as it now is. I am the more inclined to place the date far back, from the following alarming statement: 'Whoever retires from the dinner-table without revisiting the ladies, is understood to have committed the impropriety of getting tipsy, and to feel himself thenceforward unfit for their society. The more modest a man is, the more cautious he will be to avoid this self-imposed stigma.' This is really dreadful. The change from those detailed instructions concerning the pink of behaviour above stairs, to this warning against helpless intoxication below, is tremendous and alarming! Let us see what other solecism has to be guarded against! The butler should not wear white gloves; 'the practice followed in the best circles is to cause him to wrap his thumb in the corner of a napkin.' Thus attired, it would be the height of under-breeding to express sympathy with him under the impression that he had cut that thumb.' The remarks of our author concerning the being late for dinner (if my vulgar approbation is of any value to him) have my most cordial concurrence; as usual, he has expressed them with peculiar felicity. 'A town in flames caused Blucher to be later at Waterloo than was expected; but unless you also have tumbrils which would run the risk of explosion, even such an impediment as this is scarcely a justification for being late at a dinner-party.'

* Ladies, please to observe these remarks are not the original views of the present writer; they are in the text of *Court Etiquette*.

Besides these useful hints for our conduct on everyday occasions, our Man of the World affords us directions respecting births, marriages, and burials, if we would wish them to be effected in a polite manner. At marriages, for instance, he observes, that it is but too usual in the middle ranks of life for the bridegroom, after the ceremony, to salute the bride. 'This practice is decidedly to be avoided; it is never followed by people in the best society. A bridegroom with any tact will take care that this is known to his wife, since any disappointment of expectations would be a breach of good-breeding.' In sending out marriage-cards, there is no especial mandate against using gummed envelopes, but this is probably for the same reason that Draco omitted parricide in his list of offences: our Man of the World cannot picture to himself such a want of decorum. In ordinary correspondence, he says, 'an envelope should always cover the letter, and wax should close it. However prettily a crest may be embossed upon the envelope, the practice of securing the letter by moistening the gummed corner is as disgusting as the use of a wafer. . . . There is no pomposity or affectation in any gentleman sealing his letter with the crest or arms of his family; and to omit it, or to borrow the seal of a friend, would be as absurd as to write that friend's name instead of his own.'

Finally, be careful of people's Names. 'They are as sacred as personal honour. Every man thinks his name an integral part of himself; how he received it, or when he will part with it, he knows not; nor can any demonstration separate it from the idea of his personal identity. A jest upon such a subject is therefore resented with the utmost virulence, and though habitual caution may seal a man's lips on the instant of the offence, he will neither forgive nor forget it.' These bloodthirsty remarks are continued to great length, and help to strengthen in me that disinclination to aspire to the best circles which our author's advice as to Conversation first implanted in my once envious bosom. I am rather dull of hearing, and it is just possible that I might address some aristocratic individual by a name only approximate to his own. I might call a De Wilkyn, Bilkins, for instance, and get my throat cut in the most gentleman-like manner conceivable.

No, my friends of the middle classes, let us be content with our position. Let us not yearn after those spheres wherein the butler enwraps his thumb in damask. The Reviewer above referred to condescended to tell us the truth when he remarked, that upon the whole—if he might judge from what he saw of us across the immense interval of social position between us and him—we enjoy ourselves after our coarse fashion as much as the very best society, and perhaps even a thought more. The Lord Steward may never be commanded by Her Majesty to invite you to dinner, my friends; but if so, consider there is some mistake among the court officials, which often happens. And let us dine together, and drink Her health—God bless Her—all the same, in porter with a head to it.

THE BLACK EXCHANGE:

AN ATTORNEY'S STORY.

My first setting up was in Charleston, South Carolina, where I got a profitable practice among the neighbouring planters, and became man of business to Arthur Fosbrook, Esquire. He was one of the richest men in the state, and of one of the oldest families; his plantation, besides being of more than common extent, yielded the best cotton, indigo, and tobacco. It had been in the Fosbrooks' possession for a century and more; the grandfather of my employer was one of Washington's officers in the War of Independence; in short, the Fosbrooks were reckoned chiefs among the Carolina aristocracy, for,

strange as it may appear, republican America boasts such a class, particularly in the Southern States. Their plantation being within three miles of Charleston, they kept no town-house, as many of the up-country planters do, or did in my time—let me observe, it is forty years ago—the city being a sort of capital for all the Southern States, much frequented by retired West Indians, with their fortunes made, and boasting a good deal of fashion and select society. Fosbrook Hall, within three miles of it, was a large, antiquated, stately-looking place, which, but for its southern verandahs and summer windows of lattice-work, would have reminded one of some old family mansion far away in England. It had got lawn, garden, and park on the old-country model. The first Fosbrook had laid them out when he settled in South Carolina, and built his house on lands granted to him by George I. it was said for active service against the Old Chevalier. My employer was his last male descendant, and failing his line, the rich plantation, house, and all, must pass to a far-off cousin, the heir-at-law, who was then a colonel in the United States army, not very young, for he had distinguished himself at the defence of New Orleans in the last brush with England, but still unmarried, though remarkably handsome, and in high repute with the ladies. Some said he couldn't meet with a fortune to his mind, his sword and his expectations being all the gallant colonel had; and as the latter hung about Fosbrook Hall, they were likely to be soon fulfilled or disappointed, for Arthur Fosbrook had a daughter, his only child, heiress to rank, wealth, and name, and now beginning to be talked of among beaux and belles in the early South as woman-grown, for she was just fifteen. They had fixed that age, I know not why, as the proper one for bringing out in Charleston; and Miss Fosbrook was to be brought out with becoming pomp and solemnity at a grand ball on her fifteenth birthday, which happened six months after I had become acquainted with the family, and established in her father's business. A letter of introduction which I had brought from a legal firm of some eminence in London, with which his family had an ancient connection, first recommended me to Mr Fosbrook, and I was received by him and his not only as a lawyer, but a friend. The peculiar institution of the South has one good effect as regards white men with their wits for an estate—the African race serving for everybody's inferior, all of the perfect European blood are equalised as gentlemen, and a wealthy planter thus receiving his attorney, is by no means so remarkable as it might seem to English eyes. So I got acquainted with the Fosbrooks, ladies and all; but I liked the gentleman best, and therein did not differ from every acquaintance of the family. He was a handsome, high-spirited man, agreeable in his manners, chivalrous in honour, generous to a fault, and so good-natured, that anybody with little enough of conscience could persuade or coax him into anything. In other respects, Mr Fosbrook was, like most Southern gentlemen, a good shot, a good rider, a good billiard-player, a polished man of the world, and a bit of a *bon-vivant*. Mrs Fosbrook was known to be a great deal more strait-laced and serious. She was great in church-going, uncommonly proper, and could talk religion and morality by the mile; but when it suited the lady's whims or tempers, she was capable of doing hard or sly things, which her husband would not have thought of. It was said she had been a belle in her youth, but American belleship quickly passes; it had gone from Mrs Fosbrook for many a year, and left her faded, but very genteel—what the women call ladylike; well informed, too, out of schools and books, but narrow-minded by nature, and strongly inclined to censoriousness and jealousy.

The daughter, Miss Letitia, was expected to fill her mother's place in the world of youth and fashion,

and the girl had some beauty, but no resemblance to either of her parents. Her complexion was remarkably dark; her features had a full, almost coarse cast; it would have been treason to say so, but they slightly approached the negro mould. She was tall and well developed for her years, had fine black eyes, and hair of the same colour; they said it was rather too wavy, and could never be dressed in smooth bands. But people liked Miss Letitia better than her mother, for she was livelier and more good-natured than ever that excellent lady could have been, though quite as proud of herself, her rank, and her fashion, and somewhat tainted with the maternal inclination to jealousy. Miss Letitia had a companion, or rather playfellow, whom nobody that frequented the house could miss knowing, she was so constantly with the young lady and in the family rooms. Her name was Letitia too; but they called her Letty, by way of proper distinction, for the blood of Africa was in her veins, and she was the daughter of a slave. Letty's mother, unlike the rest of Mr Fosbrook's negroes, was not a native of his estate, but had been purchased, together with her unborn child, at the sale of a deceased West Indian's establishment; she had been parted from her husband, it was said, through Mrs Fosbrook's determination to have the woman but not the man in her household. She was not a complete African, but something whiter than a mulatto—I think it was a Spanish trace she had—and they called her Elva, probably an abbreviation of Elvira. A thin, wiry, early withered woman she looked; but there was a piercing intelligence in her keen black eyes, not common to the negro race; she was more grave and silent, too, than is their wont, was thought to have a deal of discretion, and known to be great in needle-work. Her European origin accounted to most people for this superiority, and it also helped to account for the surprising beauty of her daughter. Letty was positively fair, with finely cut features, long glossy hair, and a figure so finely moulded, yet so slender, that she might have stood for the youngest of the Graces. To a stranger, it was astonishing that the girl could have come of African blood, but one gets accustomed to any wonder. Everybody knew her to be Elva's daughter, born on the same day as Miss Letitia, and allowed to grow up as her playfellow and foster-sister, for Elva was made nurse to the infant heiress, having either by her wisdom or good-luck acquired the particular confidence and cold-blooded liking of Mrs Fosbrook, and continued to be her right-hand woman and family seamstress till the time of my story.

Curious it is that, though the African race are held in bondage in the Southern States, the same amount of personal repulsion, or rather antipathy, to them does not prevail as in the North. The negro nurse and negro playfellow have a hold on the affections and memory of the plantation child, which its grown-up life acknowledges; and where dispositions are good and circumstances favourable, slavery thus becomes something like what it must have been in patriarchal times. When secession was yet undreamed of, and vigilance committees were not, that state of things was common enough in the Carolinas, and long established at Fosbrook Hall. The master's will was law, but it was guided by good-nature and good customs. The old negroes had seen him get his first lessons in walking; the young had grown up under his government. They were all well provided for, and not overworked. The outdoor people had their pretty cottages and gardens, where the children played; and the aged rested literally under vines and fig-trees. The house-servants had the comforts and sociability of a numerous well-kept establishment, with all the life, gaiety, and ease of a wealthy planter's mansion within three miles of Charleston. They kept all manner of festivals; all the family birthdays, including their own; had Sunday dresses, all white, of course,

with flashy rings and pins, and very few troubles except the pleasing of the missis, which was generally allowed to be a difficult task, and seldom properly accomplished by any but Elva. The quantity of fine needle-work she did for Mrs Fosbrook was something to be astonished at. The good lady took a sort of pride in shewing off the collars, sleeves, and trimmings worked by the 'woman she had bought almost in spite of Mr Fosbrook, and saved him the trouble he should have had with that self-willed, obstinate-looking man, Elva's husband. The poor creature was so much better without him. Did not all her friends see how contentedly she sat in her own little room, or the back verandah, working away from morning till night? That woman was a treasure.' Elva's daughter was not in such favour with the missis, though a gentler, more sweet-tempered girl could not have been found among black or white. Indeed, there was something both soft and sad in Letty's look and manner, which made one believe in omens when her after-fate was come. It was perhaps the gentleness and sweetness of her disposition, as well as their early playtimes, which made the young heiress cling so fondly to her humble companion, and take such delight in her society, even when grown-up life, with its duties and distinctions, came on. They had never been seen separate, except when her mother wanted Letty, and Miss Letitia had to go to lessons, to which the young lady was not partial; and when, at last, the bringing-out time came, and she was expected to be admired and married in due time, Miss Letitia still protested that Letty and she should never part, but live together as mistress and maid, 'just like mamma and Elva.'

The young lady was in that mind when her fifteenth birthday arrived. Cards of invitation had been issued three weeks before to the half of Charleston. I had the honour of receiving one, and can vouch that it was a large and well-dressed gathering; but the principal guest of the evening was Colonel Fosbrook. Though never on bad terms with the proprietor, he had been seldom at the Hall. Some said its lady was not to his mind, some that his military duties took him to different quarters. At all events, he was known by reputation rather than by sight to Mr Fosbrook's friends; but all who saw him that evening acknowledged that a more distinguished-looking or agreeable man never entered a Carolina ball-room. Mr Fosbrook had made a point of having him on the birthday. His excellent lady and he were too prudent to say it in so many words, but I, as their family lawyer, guessed that they had set their hearts on a match between the colonel and the heiress. Though at least twenty years her senior, he was only in the prime of life, a man whom any lady might choose with credit to her taste. Moreover, the colonel had high principles, sound sense, and prudence, was a Fosbrook of the same descent, the heir-at-law after Miss Letitia, and most suitable to perpetuate the name and line.

He was expected to stay for some weeks, but could not arrive before the evening of the birthday. I remember being introduced to him in the crowded ball-room, and observing that, though attentive to all the ladies, as became a Southern gentleman, he shewed a particular regard for the daughter of the house, and the belle of the evening. I forget how long her mother and female friends had been occupied with what she should wear. The young lady's complexion puzzled them. At last, they fixed on amber satin, with gold ornaments, in which, I must say, Miss Letitia looked well. They had at the same time agreed—because nothing else would serve the heiress—on dressing Letty handsomely, but in white, which no Southern lady will wear, being, wonderful to say, the negroes' chosen colour, and allowing her to appear in public as Miss Letitia's personal attendant.

I suppose Colonel Fosbrook had never seen the girl before; but at the close of the first dance, as he was conducting Miss Letitia to her seat, Letty came up on the discharge of her duties. How promoted and happy, yet timid withal, the sweet girl looked, as she handed the heiress her expensive Parisian fan. Never did man approaching forty look so struck as the colonel; he said nothing for a few minutes, but his eyes were fixed on Letty; she saw it, blushed deeply, and stole away behind her mistress, while he inquired of Mr Fosbrook, who came up at the moment: 'Where on earth did you find that lovely girl?'

'Oh, my daughter's maid,' said Fosbrook, with his accustomed ease.

'She is not a negro?' said the colonel.

'Yes, I assure you. I bought her mother in Charleston. She is wonderfully fair, I must allow, and a good girl. Letitia has always liked her, and would have her here to-night.'

The rest of Mr Fosbrook's communication was made in a tone too low for my hearing; but all that brilliant evening, wherever Letty came or went through the handsome suite of reception-rooms, anxious to make herself useful, and on her promotion, his eyes followed the girl; I saw him gazing after her while Mrs Fosbrook was preaching to him about doing good, and Miss Letitia tossing her head, and shewing off her jewels. It became manifest to me, also, that both mother and daughter could see as well as I, and the sight was one to bring the worst part of their natures uppermost. Can any woman commit a greater sin against another than to get admired in her stead? The colonel did admire Letty, maid and of negro origin as she was, and there was many an eye in the ball-room that followed the slight, graceful figure, and fair, winning face as well as his, though on nobody was the impression so marked. The man could not help shewing it, for all his sense and experience, and I was not prepared for the effect it had on the young heiress. She grew positively ugly—awful, as the Americans say—with ill-temper and jealousy. I thought she would strike poor Letty when the innocent creature came to settle her wreath, thrown back by a haughty toss. Miss Letitia, frowning fiercely, said: 'I don't want you here any more'; and Mrs Fosbrook desired the nearest servant to tell that girl she might go down stairs. Poor Letty went on the instant, looking as if she had committed murder. The colonel, who had witnessed all, seemed astonished, angry, and a little out of his discretion, for he rose from Miss Letitia's side with a very brief apology, walked straight out to the verandah, and stayed there, pacing about for half an hour and more. When he came back, Colonel Fosbrook was himself again. We saw no more of Letty, had a magnificent supper, and all went home at daybreak. Miss Letitia and her mother seemed to have recovered their good-humour. The colonel continued his visit, as expected. They were never without company to dinner or tea; I was always invited, Mr Fosbrook having taken a particular fancy to me, and thus I had an opportunity of seeing that attentions were still paid to the daughter of the house; but her playfellow and foster-sister was not in the request she had been; Letty was manifestly kept out of sight, and under surveillance; and when the poor girl did chance to become visible, it was sad to see the resigned and helpless sorrow that had settled on her fair young face. I am not sure that the colonel had not interested her also; I observed her peeping out at his comings and goings from back-windows and hidden corners, though Letty had not much opportunity for that, as Mrs Fosbrook now sent her to work with her mother, remarking, that 'Elva was a prudent, sensible creature, and would keep nonsense out of the girl's head.'

I don't know how Elva fulfilled the expected duty;

but coming to talk on particular business with Mr Fosbrook one afternoon—a time when Southern ladies are generally fast within doors—I found the colonel leaning over the rails of the back verandah, where Letty sat at work. He was evidently talking to the girl; she had let her muslin fall, and was picking it up all in a flush. The colonel saw he was caught, but was too much of a gentleman to shew it, bade me good-day without changing his position, asked if I had seen the morning papers, if there were any news, but did not observe that there were a pair of fierce, cold, jealous eyes taking notes of him from the window above, where the Venetian blind concealed his excellent hostess. The colonel walked into the house with me, and Letty went on with her sewing. I saw her sitting there when my business was done, stitching away, but the flush had faded then, and she looked sad and thoughtful.

All the way home, I had thoughts about the colonel's intentions, and Mrs Fosbrook's next move; it was no affair of mine, but one could not help feeling an interest in poor Letty and the ill-luck that seemed closing round her.

That same week, the colonel went off to join his regiment; I happened to be particularly busy with the affairs of a broken-up land-company, and had no occasion to go to the Hall for some time; but Mr Fosbrook called at my office one morning, seemed very friendly, talked of two or three trifling matters, and had evidently something else in his mind—something disagreeable, and hard to begin speaking about. He looked at his watch, looked out of the window, and then said: 'By the by, Mr Clarkson, you must manage a piece of business for me—a particular and unpleasant one, I must say—we are going to part with Letty. Yes,' he continued, catching my astonished look; 'Mrs Fosbrook will have it so; she says the girl has got upsetting notions, and will give trouble. I cannot see it myself, but Mrs Fosbrook is an uncommonly observant woman. At anyrate,' and the man looked desperately worried, 'there is no putting women off a thing once they take it in their heads.'

'And Miss Fosbrook?' said I.

'Oh, she agrees with her mother, which is very proper; but it goes against my conscience, and the girl is so young. Do come over, and try to talk her out of it to-morrow evening: a lawyer should be able to do that, if anybody can.'

I knew the cause of poor Letty's condemnation, one which Mr Fosbrook would not acknowledge, had it been made known to him; and I also knew that talking to ladies of Mrs Fosbrook's mould against any piece of spleen was about as useful as talking against the tide. I went, nevertheless, as requested, got on the subject, and made nothing of it. Mrs Fosbrook discoursed of her principles, her responsibility, and her sense of duty; but on Letty's being disposed of, sent off the plantation, sold, in short, she was resolved, beyond the power of argument. I suggested that, if it were thought proper to remove the girl, she might be apprenticed or boarded out; but Mrs Fosbrook would hear of no such compromise. It was contrary to her principles to raise coloured people so far above their natural position. Letty's mother had been bought and sold, and so should she. I mentioned how hard it would be to part them, the girl so young, and the woman having no other child; but Mrs Fosbrook was clear on keeping Elva, she was such a charming worker. Who would do her sleeves and collars properly, if Elva were gone? Besides, the woman was not at all attached to her daughter. No doubt, that was Letty's fault, though she had not observed it before. Elva was uncommonly sensible for a person of colour, and would know it was all for the best.

'You'll be sorry to part with Letty?' said I to Miss Letitia, who at that moment came in from her evening walk.

'Yes, no; that is, if mamma thinks it right,' and the young heiress admired her new Paris bonnet in the chimney-glass. The bringing-out and the jealousy had done their work—there was no hope from that quarter; and I could only go back to my office with an earnest wish that the ladies might change their minds. I had heard nothing from the Hall, and kept well out of it for three weeks, when Mr Fosbrook once more called. I'll do him the justice to say he looked more worried than ever, and throwing himself into a chair, said: 'It's of no use, Clarkson; that business must be done. I have no peace at home day or night, and I'll stand it no longer. No doubt, Mrs Fosbrook knows better than I do all about girls, black or white. Letty must go; I know it is the best thing for her too, Clarkson. They wouldn't be kind to her, if I held out; and her mother don't care about the girl. She cares for nobody, as far as I see, but Mrs Fosbrook, though it was she that made me part Elva from her husband. That always went against my mind, yet you see it has turned out well, and so may this. She is a very observant woman. You'll do the best you can, Clarkson. I don't care about the price—it may go to buy the girl clothes—but find some good, honest, kindly home for her, where she will be taken care of, and get into no mischief or hard work. After bringing her up so with my own girl, and she so pretty and good-tempered, whatever they may say of her now, I couldn't rest in my house if Letty were not well provided for; but you'll do the best you can.'

I promised to do so, being by this time aware of the necessity. Since Letty had become a cause of family disquiet, her immediate removal was the best thing for all parties; but I had some difficulty in finding the sort of purchaser which Mr Fosbrook's instructions and my own inclinations urged me to seek. At length, however, as price was no object, I hit upon a member of the before-mentioned land-company, whom its business had brought to Charleston from the borders of the Dismal Swamp in North Carolina, where he had reclaimed and brought into cultivation an extensive farm, which, with the help of three maiden sisters, he was making a small Mount Harmony of his own. Whether they were Dunkers, Shakers, or New Jerusalemites, I never ascertained; but he and his managing sisters I knew to be just, conscientious, and kindly. Letty would be safe and well among them, once she got reconciled to the new life, and far enough out of Mrs Fosbrook's way. I thought it would be terrible work breaking the news to her; but the lady of high principles made no ceremony about that, and poor Letty seemed to have expected something of the kind. Fosbrook told me she never said a word, but bowed her head and stole away with the tears in her eyes. A strange and hopeless resignation seemed to have come over the girl; she did not cry or lament, but packed up her clothes as she was told, took a quiet, kindly leave of all the negroes—there was not a dry eye among them but her own—bade Mrs Fosbrook good-bye with the same gentle sadness, and going up to her former playfellow, said: 'Farewell, Miss Letitia. I hope you will get a better maid, and be always happy; but I did not think you would see me sold and sent away.' On hearing that, the heiress began to cry violently, and at last went into hysterics, for which Mrs Fosbrook scolded Letty. The master of the Hall had gone off on a shooting excursion, I charitably believe, to spare himself the scene; and I saw her safe off, little trunk and all, in the good farmer's travelling-wagon, and went back to my office with a relieved mind.

Elva had made no demonstrations at her daughter's departure. The footman told me afterwards that she had gone privately to Mrs Fosbrook, when the matter was first guessed at, and begged of her, earnestly but calmly, not to send her child from her; but that excellent lady heard her with the same

unmoved composure to which I had been treated, and made the woman understand that her intentions were to be acquiesced in, and should be carried out. Elva subsided into resignation at once, parted quietly with her daughter, and continued to stitch away in her own room or the back-verandah, as if nothing had happened. If the woman had any repinings or regrets, the Fosbrooks were too much occupied to notice them, for the colonel came back the week after Letty's departure. If he missed her, nobody was allowed to be aware of it; he must have heard of the transaction from some one about the house, and that visit was not a long one. But the Fosbrooks paid him every attention, wrote, invited, sent tokens of their remembrance, and in a couple of months more the colonel came back again; by that time, having probably made up his mind that there was no more prudent course for him, the heir-at-law, than to marry the heiress-apparent, as the family were willing, and the young lady nothing loath. He came and paid attentions accordingly. All the Fosbrooks' circle knew it would be a match, and a match it was. Having fairly commenced his suit, the colonel would lose no time; he must rejoin his regiment, which might be ordered to Florida, where the Indians were then giving trouble. Of course, he was an impatient lover, as all men are at forty years. So the Fosbrooks gave their consent. It was early for Miss Letitia to enter on the responsibilities of married life; but girls marry young in South Carolina, and the dark complexion and large growth made her look beyond her years.

The wedding was celebrated with great pomp, in the most fashionable church of Charleston; there were half a score of bridesmaids, and finery enough to keep the ladies talking for a fortnight. I forget the number of dresses and the amount of bridal presents provided for the heiress; they were sufficient to have turned the head of a wiser girl. Everybody agreed that Miss Letitia had the surest prospect of happiness. She certainly queened it wonderfully for the middle of her sixteenth year. The colonel was her own choice, as well as that of her parents, notwithstanding the disparity of their age. On his account, she had parted with her early playfellow, and in the fuss, the grandeur, and the novelty, seemed to have forgotten that Letty ever existed. I suppose Mrs Fosbrook forgot too, she was so engaged with the glory of her house, and preaching about their overflowing cup and the duty of thankfulness. But the master of the Hall did not forget, though he had gone to shoot, for fear of the scene which did not take place at her going away; he spoke of the poor girl often in my office, and made me write to the good people in North Carolina, inquiring about her. Their reports were all favourable as regarded Letty's conduct—her patience, her gentleness, her good-nature, were subjects of continual praise from the farmer and his managing sisters; but they wrote only in reply to my letters. I had not written for some time, till Fosbrook reminded me of it a few days before the wedding; and their answer grieved us both, for it stated that poor Letty, though she took kindly to the place and people, seemed to pine away latterly, and had caught the swamp-fever, from which she had no strength to recover, and died on the very day of Miss Letitia's marriage. Fosbrook could not keep the news to himself, though he at first promised to do so; but in the general excitement it seemed to affect nobody in the Hall, not even Elva, which Mrs Fosbrook thought an additional proof of her sense. She had undertaken the breaking of the news to the bereaved mother, and performed it to her own satisfaction. I believe she also broke it to the colonel and his bride when they returned from that indispensable excursion which people must take after the ceremony of white veils and orange blossoms, the half-score of bridesmaids and elegant *déjeuner*. They

do these things in style in South Carolina; and Miss Letitia had come through them so creditably, and had so much more to do in the way of receiving visits, and attending bridal-parties, that there was no time for regret or repentance. I never heard what she said or did on the occasion; but while the visits were going on, and the parties pending, poor Elva slipped on the stair while running up with a tucker, ordered in great haste, that Mrs Colonel Fosbrook might see how it would suit with her cream-coloured tabinet, fell to the bottom, and broke her leg. She had the best medical attendance, of course; a woman who could work such sleeves and collars was not to be neglected, though, as her excellent mistress remarked, 'she could work just as well without the limb: what a mercy it was not one of her arms.' But from some constitutional cause, the accident could not be remedied—the broken bone would not adhere, the wound would not heal, and the doctor at length announced his dread of mortification. He added—I presume it was to settle Mrs Fosbrook—that there was no use in attempting to amputate the limb, the patient's system had been so vitiated by her sedentary life, she had no chance of recovery. His opinion was confirmed in a few days; mortification set in, and poor Elva's death-warrant was sealed.

The doctor had been seeing her for the last time, and gone away saying he could do nothing more—the woman would not hold out till sunset, when I called to pay my congratulatory visit to the new-married pair. The ceremony had been postponed on account of business, but all the world was visiting, and so must I. It was a glorious day, in the early spring-time of the South, before the fierce heat set in, and everything looked bright and beautiful about Fosbrook Hall. The abode of pleasantness and peace it seemed, and I was admiring the prospect from the bay-windows of the drawing-room; while Mrs Fosbrook, having no other listeners, just then was going on about the overflowing cup, and how thankful they should be, when her own maid came in with a whispered message. 'It is poor Elva,' said the excellent lady, breaking off her strain; 'she has taken a strange fancy to see us all in her room: the maid said she spoke of having something to tell; but of course it is only a fancy of the poor creature; still I think we should go—what do you say, Mr Clarkson?—it will remind us of our latter end, and no doubt encourage poor Elva.'

We all rose, the two couples and myself, for Mr Fosbrook said: 'Come along, Clarkson,' and proceeded to Elva's room. It was neat and orderly, as she had always kept it; the morning sun was shimmering through the white-curtained window, and the scent of flowers came in from the garden beyond; and the woman, who was to be encouraged on her last journey, sat up in bed wan and worn with sickness, but looking more lively and energetic than ever she had seemed in her stitching-days, and with a keener light in her deep black eyes.

'How are you, Elva?' said Fosbrook, coming kindly forward.

'Not very well, master; but I am going home,' said Elva, 'to the long home prepared for black and white; and there is something I want to tell you all before I go, particularly the missis here;' and Elva fixed her eyes on the mistress she was said to have been so much attached to, with a look of such piercing power as for once in her life struck that lady speechless. 'Did not you buy me away from my husband sixteen years ago, when he was sold far west, and I never saw him more? Did not you sell my only child away from me, till she died of fever on the edge of the Dismal Swamp, and wasn't it all in the order of Providence, or it never could have happened? You told me so, and I was to believe it, and not repine. Now, I'll tell you something that must have been in the order of Providence, for it happened too. It was not my daughter that died on the edge of the Dismal

bright breezy blue, through which floats one exquisite web of summer-cloud.

Her picture of the next year, 1849, 'Oxen ploughing near Nevers,' is doubtless fresh in the memory of most visitors to the International Exhibition. Many an English rustic paid it there the honest compliment of staring wide-mouthed approbation; and this recalls a bonâ-fide criticism, more to the point, perhaps, than anything the present writer could find to say concerning its merits. During the Exhibition, on a certain sweltering day between haytime and harvest, a gigantic farmer from the Fens, where agriculturists and water-beetles respectively arrive at amazing size, was watched as he contemplated the picture aforesaid. Presently plunging into the crowd, back he came, dragging a flustered female on his arm. 'Lookee, Becky,' roared Buccolius, his jolly fist so near the canvas as to draw the attention of policeman X—'lookee, *picture* here be about as cheap as rats in a granary; but *them's* beasts, Becky, and *that's* ploughing!' Great as the popularity of Rosa Bonheur's 'Horse-fair' has been, the 'Ploughing near Nevers,' and its companion picture, 'Haymaking,' now both in the Luxembourg, rank perhaps higher in artistic merit. The last, exhibited in 1855, would, as the official announcement distinctly states, have obtained the cross of the Legion of Honour, but for the sex of the artist; a dictum, so it seems to us, nothing short of a slur on the boasted gallantry of our Gallic neighbours.

In 1849, Mademoiselle Bonheur was appointed by government Director of the female School of Design. In the course of the same year, her father, who had found leisure, during the latter part of his life, to send several pictures of respectable merit to the salon, was carried off by cholera. He left his younger children to their sister's special care, and the trust has been nobly fulfilled. Auguste Bonheur follows her steps as landscape and animal painter; her second brother, Isidore, is well known as an animal sculptor, and the graceful compositions in still-life and flower-painting by Madame Peyrol, the youngest of the family, are deservedly admired. Mademoiselle Bonheur has chosen as her Paris residence an old-fashioned house in the Rue d'Assas, with a large courtyard attached. Entering this, you find a farm-yard in the heart of the city; round it are stables and cattle-sheds; in the middle, a good-sized piece of pasture is enclosed, where sheep, goats, and heifers browse together on the best of terms. Here a peacock airs his train in the sun; there a knot of pigeons coo and beckon, cocks crow, guinea-fowl call, hens clamour over their brood. At intervals over the strident din of the poultry booms the deep bellow of a Highland steer, or one long bay from a favourite English hound. Cross the threshold of the painting-room, and there are these living models multiplied on the walls by studies more or less finished, but all portrait-like in their faithfulness, all instinct with that subtle charm which has been well called the painter's magic. Presently in comes a goat, evidently free of the sanctum; trots round with a critical air, which is irresistibly comic; wags his venerable beard over sundry sketches of himself, and away clatters Capricornus again. Next appears Margot, a beautiful mare, coming straight up to her owner's easel with those affectionate whinnies which beg some token of recognition quite as plainly as any human utterance. The figure, in a loose costume, something between blouse and paletot, seated before the easel, appears somewhat insignificant; but now as the artist looks up with a smile at her favourite, one glance at the face, which most of us know through Dubufe's portrait, at the massive forehead, at the fine intent eyes, the physiognomy, in which strength and simplicity are so rarely blended, suffices to impress you with the presence of genius.

Rosa Bonheur's works are so highly appreciated by

English amateurs, that they are becoming more numerous in this country than in her own. Several of them, including her delicious 'Morning in the Highlands,' the 'Horse-fair,' the 'Ploughing near Nevers,' and the 'Haymaking,' are well known through engravings or lithographs. Perhaps the high favour she enjoys on our own side of the Channel may be mainly attributed to the vivid realism of her style. Her pictures are eminently calculated to enlarge our enjoyment of outdoor nature; this she presents to us precisely as it appears, not perhaps to every eye, but to that of the painter. There is no conventional arrangement, no vicious over-elaboration, no pretension whatever, not so much as a pretension to simplicity. What she gives us is true, wholesome reality, as observed with a clear eye, and set forth by a skilful hand.

GLEANINGS FROM DARK ANNALS.

It is possible that the above title may seem to some to partake of the nature of that famous scene in a popular drama, called the *Sensation Header*, but if so, this is only in appearance. The present writer has no intention of 'shocking' the public into becoming purchasers of this periodical—a method of applying electricity to Circulation of which he has never approved. Remember, however, 'we could do it, an we would.' There lives no reader so bald but that I could raise a hair or two upon him, if I chose, by the recital of horrid stories. My brain is just now teeming with them. It has been my duty of late months—through certain exceptional circumstances, which need not be here explained—to wade through the red Catalogues of Human Crime. The motive which prompted, nay, compelled me so to do exists no longer, but the effect of these awful researches unfortunately remains. De Quincey tells us that he was dreadfully punished in dreams for having benevolently given a wandering Malay a portion of that opium which was his own habitual solace. Every night, through an association of ideas, excited by that contemptible tramp, the great philosopher was transported in imagination (which to him was reality) to Southern Asia—the cradle of the human race, and the seat of awful images and associations. He found himself fixed for centuries at the summit of pagodas, or locked up in their secret rooms. He was the idol; he was the priest; he was worshipped; he was sacrificed. Let him tell the dreadful story in his own half-humorous, half-ghastly way. 'I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Iris and Osiris; I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. Thousands of years I lived, and was buried in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and was laid, confounded with unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.'

I allow that these could not have been what are popularly known and wished as 'pleasant dreams;' but compared to the nightly miseries that I have lately suffered, those slumbers of Mr De Quincey were Elysian. Crocodiles and pagodas must convey a sense of unreality in their terrors, even in dreams. I do not believe, notwithstanding all his protestations, that the Opium Eater suffered as any imaginative linen-draper's assistant would do on the night succeeding a Sunday spent in the perusal of the *Newgate Calendar*, and ending with a supper of toasted cheese. The hours of sleep would probably be devoted to his autobiography, as a criminal of the deepest dye. Remorse and Terror would hunt him down in the most natural manner, until Detection took him off their hands. Then he would smell rue; he would stand in the dock before the awful presence of the judge; the

verdict 'Guilty' would be most distinctly enunciated by the foreman of the jury; and all the subsequent proceedings on the scaffold would be carried on with elaborate detail. Fortunate, indeed, for that imaginative apprentice if the demon of dreams was so far merciful; the probability is that he would seem to refuse to plead, and hear the following judgment read against him, ordained in all such cases of contumacy: 'You shall be sent to the prison from whence you came, and put into a mean room, stopped from the light, and shall there be laid on the bare ground, without any litter, straw, or other covering. You shall lie upon your back; your head shall be covered, and your feet shall be bare. One of your arms shall be drawn with a cord to one side of the room, and the other arm to the other side; and your legs shall be served in the like manner. Then shall be laid upon your body as much iron or stone as you can bear, and more. And the first day after, you shall have three morsels of barley-bread, without any drink; and the second day, you shall be allowed to drink as much as you can, at three times, of water that is next the prison-door, except running water, without any bread; and this shall be your diet till you die.' Then the imaginative apprentice would (in nightmare) be pressed to death with deliberation, and suffer the just punishment of reading such sad literature upon a Sunday, followed by toasted cheese.

Now, although the present writer eats no supper, the *Newgate Calendar* is but as a work of the late estimable Mrs Barbauld, compared with those which have (perforce) formed the subject of his studies for the last six months or so. Crime, ancient and modern; crime, foreign, British, and colonial; and punishments, far worse than crime—abhorrent, unnatural, prolonged—these things have formed my sole literary food of late, and I have only just risen from the banquet. Do not imagine, therefore, that any periodical, however cheap, however profusely illustrated, however bent upon elevating the masses by the sublime engine of Terror, could compete with me, if I only chose to take up that highly popular line, in the cheerful art of chilling the blood and marrow. Given the desire on my own part, and given (which would never be given) the permission to gratify it, by the conductors of this *Journal*, and I flatter myself I could make a good many people's nights uncomfortable.

There was lately exhibiting on a blank wall in London, a magnificent painting, designed, doubtless, to increase the circulation of some cheap periodical: the colouring was gorgeous, and the scale of the picture a little over life-size; the subject was as follows: The scene was a sort of domed chamber of immense extent, in which sat a number of judicial persons, masked. A human figure, doubtless the accused person, tightly bound, was suspended from the ceiling (like a chandelier), and oscillated from side to side of it; the oscillations, themselves inconvenient, were rendered more so by two enormous torches, placed opposite to one another, into one or other of which the human pendulum infallibly swung at the end of each vibration. His examination was conducted during the interval of aerial passage, when he was not singing, and his replies (which must have been singularly clear and valuable) were set down in writing by the judges. Altogether, it was an exciting illustration, and reflected equal credit upon the brain that conceived it, the hand that executed it, and the bill-sticker who had placed it in a most excellent situation in New Oxford Street, where nobody could fail to see it. But as for any terror that the author of that scene designed to excite in my individual bosom—why, compared to certain *real* situations which it (unhappily) recalled at once to my memory, it seemed quite a humane and dignified method of conducting a criminal investigation. If, on the other hand, it was intended as an illustration of the severity of Punish-

ment—to me, so recently familiar with the desperate wickednesses which have before now been legally committed under that title, it seems calculated (by its mildness) to bring the fine old criminal laws of our own, and especially of a neighbouring country, into contempt.

What was it, for instance, as a punishment, compared to that of Madame Gamp of Paris (no Mrs Harris, remember, but a real person), condemned for the murder of no less than sixty infants, and executed on the 28th of May 1672? 'A gibbet was erected, under which a fire was made, and the prisoner being brought to the place of execution, was hung up in a large iron cage, in which were also placed sixteen wild cats, which had been caught in the woods for that purpose. When the heat of the fire became unendurable, the cats flew upon the woman, as the cause of the intense pain they felt. In about fifteen minutes'—But that surely is enough, and more than enough, to convince folk that the present writer possesses some very raw material indeed for sensation-writing, if he only chose to use it.

Having, however, exhibited his power for evil, let him hasten to shew himself to be the harmless being he naturally is. In sober fact, his works have been hitherto of rather a moral and didactic character. He naturally belongs to the school of Mrs Hannah More; he has written poems (but far from passionate ones) upon the affections; he even thinks 'there is something to be said' for the principles of the Vegetarians. The respectable public may feel themselves, therefore, perfectly safe in his spotless hands, even when he takes Crime for his subject. Let them be assured that nothing to raise the hair upon the head of infancy, or the blush upon the cheek of innocence, will emanate from his pen, though extracting from the annals of justice. He must write about *them*, because his head (as has been stated) is full of nothing else, and the head has something to do with Literature still, all detracting notwithstanding; but he will set down nothing alarming, nothing shocking; he 'will roar you as gently as any sucking-dove, he will roar you as 'twere any nightingale.' For in the hideous Abyss of Crime in which he has been groping, there are some things not hideous, nor even unlovely. There are not a few that are humorous and amusing. There are many that point a moral even for the best of us; while it is needless to say that almost all have a deep human interest. They interest us intensely even now, as we read their written record. But what must have been the attraction of each case at the time of its occurrence! How the coffee-houses must have rung with it! How the newspapers must have teemed with it! How the coachmen and guards of the royal mails must have been importuned by open-mouthed country folks to tell the latest particulars of it! What wretchedness must have been caused by it, not only in the persons who suffered at the hands of the criminal, and in the criminal himself, but what is far worse, in his (or her) innocent relatives or friends!

The romance of the matter lies almost always among these last; the rogues themselves are for the most part commonplace, and (but for the severity of their punishment) unpitiable enough. The chivalric Turpin, so celebrated in song and fiction, is in sober prose a brutal ruffian, who places a most respectable elderly lady on the fire, to persuade her to reveal the hiding-place of her silver spoons; who drinks to such a degree that he forgets his professional engagements, and who robs poor servant-girls in spite of the merciful entreaties of his own companions. The hero of the *Colleen Bawn* and his devoted foster-brother are, off the stage, a couple of remorseless villains, who quarrel about money, and then denounce one another; instead of merely drowning the lovely Ellen in a picturesque lake, they cut her to pieces, just as the unromantic Greenacre served his less lamented victim, and one of

them sells her clothes. It is singular how any halo can grow around such wretches as these, no matter what period of time may have elapsed since the commission of their enormities; but what is still more wonderful, they were often canonised at the very time when their guilt was most apparent. Turpin, for instance, with nothing but his good looks to recommend him, was rescued after death from the hands of the surgeons by the populace of York, who, after carrying his body in procession through the town, replaced him in the grave from which science had stolen him, and filled his coffin with unslaked lime, to prevent any future profanation of the body of their favourite.

A still more remarkable instance of misplaced sympathy was exhibited in the case of one Hartley, an unmitigated scoundrel and footpad, who was hanged at Tyburn in 1722. Six young women dressed in white betook themselves to St James's to present a petition in his behalf. The singularity of their appearance gained them an interview with his majesty, whom they informed that if he would but pardon the offender, they would cast lots for which should be the future Mrs Hartley. The king, however, very properly observed that the fellow was more worthy of the gallows than to be the husband of any of these charming suppliants. Their prayer was the more singular, since Hartley was a widower, and had married his first wife for a reason which he took no pains to conceal. 'She was a worthy woman,' he said, 'whose first husband happening to be hanged, I married her, that she might not reproach me with a repetition of his virtues.'

With such a warning so immediately before him, one would have thought that Mr Hartley would have been careful to avoid the fatal Tree. The very contrary of this, however, seems to be the case with most criminals, and may well be considered in judging of the merits or demerits of public executions. Familiarity with the scaffold always bred contempt. Mr John Smith, a housebreaker, was hung (upon four convictions) on a certain 5th of December. After a quarter of an hour's suspension, a reprieve arrived, which would have been too tardy for most people, but upon this malefactor's being cut down, life was still found in him, and he was resuscitated. He pleaded to his pardon on the following February, but in a little while appeared again in the prisoner's dock, charged with a new offence of the same kind. In consequence of some technical difficulties, the jury brought in a special verdict, in consequence of which the affair was left to the opinion of the twelve judges, who decided in his favour. After this second escape, he was again indicted for fresh crimes, and again escaped the halter by dying a natural death within the prison walls. Nay, we even find the very executioner, Jack Ketch himself, in the person of one John Price, incurring the last penalty of the law. He had filled his dreadful office for some years, and had probably witnessed the last moments of hundreds of his fellow-creatures, had watched their agonies of mind and body, had listened to their exhortations and their prayers. All this, however, seems only to have rendered the man totally callous. Being a person of extravagant habits, he was on one occasion actually arrested in the cart on his return from an execution, and only discharged from custody 'by payment of the wages he had that day earned, and the produce of the three suits of clothes taken from the bodies of the executed men;' afterwards, he was lodged in the Marshalsea for debt, and 'being unable to attend his business at the next sessions of the old Bailey,' he lost his peculiar 'government situation.' After this, breaking out of prison, Mr John Price committed a particularly atrocious murder, and himself suffered death, at the hands of his successor, in 1718.

Such examples as these, of which we might

adduce a hundred others, are not only curiosities of crime, but lessons for our legislators. A spectacle which is thus lost upon the hangman, is not likely to have much moral influence upon a licentious mob, who make a gala of an execution morning. Not half a century ago, there was an average of two of these *per week*, or if the exhibitions were rarer, they were enhanced by the presence of a proportionate number of victims. Notwithstanding the frequency of these savage festivals, they were always excessively popular; while if there was anything at all extraordinary about the crime to be expiated, the 'dangerous classes' heaved and bellowed in front of Newgate like a stormy sea. Upon one occasion, these unfortunate persons paid dearly enough for their brutal curiosity. Two men, called Holloway and Haggerty, were sentenced to be hung on February 23, 1807, for a murder committed no less than five years previously. There really seems to have been some doubt of their guilt, and the excitement of the populace arose to the highest pitch. The crowd to witness their execution was (considering the narrowness of the locality)* quite unparalleled, and was computed at 40,000. The pressure was such that long before the malefactors appeared, numbers of persons were crying out in vain to escape, while their attempts to do so only increased the confusion. The screams of the women were dreadful. From all parts arose cries of 'murder, murder,' and females and children were seen expiring without the possibility of affording them the least assistance. At Green Arbour Lane (nearly opposite to the debtors' door), a frightful occurrence took place. A pie-man's basket (which stood on a sort of four-legged table) was overturned, and the people fell over the basket and the man as he strove to recover his wares. Those who did so never rose again. A poor woman, with a child at her breast, however, forced it into the arms of the man nearest to her, as she fell, adjuring him for God's sake to save its life; the man, himself in great personal danger, threw the infant from him, which was caught by another man, and so from hand to hand it passed, until a good-natured fellow contrived to struggle with it under a cart, where he deposited it in safety till the danger was over and the mob dispersed. Seven persons lost their lives in the centre of the throng by suffocation alone. A great portion fought with one another with the like savage fury, wherewith the prisoners in the Black Hole of Calcutta contended for the window. During the hour appointed for the suspension of the criminals, small assistance could be afforded, but after they were cut down, the constables cleared the streets, in which they found nearly one hundred persons dead or insensible. It does not appear that the survivors received any moral benefit even from this. If the example of public executions, however, is salutary, what a pattern population ought we not to have had in those early times! Forgery was an offence seldom or never pardoned, yet bank forgeries increased in number from January 1798 to January 1819 from 1102 to 30,475. In the first of those years there were 15 prosecutions for this offence, and in the last, 242! The most venial crime subjected the prisoner to the extremest punishment. No wonder the satirist exclaimed:

Scarce can our fields, such crowds at Tyburn die,
With hemp the gallows and the fleet supply.

More offences were made capital during the single reign of George III., than during the reigns of all the Plantagenets, Tudors, and Stuarts put together. In the nine years between 1819 and 1825 (both inclusive), no less than 7770 were sentenced to death, although

* A precisely similar catastrophe, in even a still more limited area, has unhappily occurred since the above lines were written—namely, in front of the Mansion House—on the occasion of the late illuminations. A child was also preserved in a manner almost identical with that described in the text.

only 579 were actually executed. Unless so much mercy as this was shewn, it was well understood that juries would not convict, preferring to violate their oaths rather than thus to purvey victims by wholesale to the shambles of the law. A few years previous, matters were still worse. In 1785, no less than twenty persons were executed at once, before Newgate, and not one of them for any offence which is now capital. In 1789, One Hundred and Eighteen prisoners lay under sentence of death together. They were brought to the bar of the Old Bailey by ten at a time, and individually offered the king's pardon on condition of being transported to Botany Bay for life. The contrast between such a state of things and the present is still more marked by the following circumstance. The horrors of transportation were then so well understood, that several of these unhappy men refused to receive the proffered boon. Instead of the 'Thank you, my lord,' with which the prisoner now receives his sentence of penal servitude, eight of these criminals chose rather to die than to be transported. The recorder addressed himself to each, exhorting them 'not to treat the benignity of their sovereign with contempt, and so to add, by a refusal of his mercy, the crime of self-murder to those for which their lives had become forfeited.' But all was useless; they were remanded to Newgate, and placed in the condemned cells. On the same day, however, the chaplain persuaded five out of the eight to think better of their strange determination. The adjournment of the court was then delayed, in hopes of the giving in of the recalcitrant three, but in vain. The warrant for their execution was made out, upon which two out of the three accepted the offered terms. The third refused to do so until the scaffold had been erected, and the sheriff was actually escorting him to his doom.

As a general rule, it was not the mere hanging that the criminals of old objected to, but the being dissected—'teased,' as they called it—afterwards. 'I have killed the best wife in the world,' observed Vincent Davis, upon his apprehension for that awful act, 'and I am certain of being hanged; but, for God's sake, don't let me be anatomised.' They had an equal horror of being hung in chains. Jackson, who was a principal actor in the most diabolical murder in the annals of British crime—that of the two unfortunate excisemen in Sussex—was so struck with terror at being measured for his irons, that he expired upon the spot. The ignorance which is the characteristic of most of the criminals of to-day, was, in the case of their prototypes, stupendous. The thought that most engrossed the mind of the condemned was, to remember to kick off his shoes when he reached the scaffold, in order to defeat the prophecy (often uttered against him, probably, in his misspent youth) that he would die in them. They quite believed in the virtue of their own dead hands applied to warts and wens, and as soon as they were turned off, it was a perquisite of the executioner's to admit persons upon the scaffold to be 'touched' for those defects. John Young, condemned for forgery in 1748, in Edinburgh, having heard that the crown law of Scotland enacted that condemned prisoners should be executed between two and four o'clock, persuaded himself that if he could procrastinate his fate beyond that time, his life would be preserved. Thereupon he actually secured the iron door of his room in such a manner that when the hour of death arrived, his jailer could not get at him. A number of smiths and masons were sent for, but no admittance could be obtained, while they were all of opinion that an aperture could not be made in the wall without endangering the whole fabric. In these strange circumstances, the lord provost and other magistrates assembled together, and debated as to what should be done, when it was determined to enter the room by breaking through the floor of that immediately above it. Six soldiers descended in

this manner, and after a sharp conflict, the unhappy man was secured, and carried to execution. This instance is remarkable as contrasting with the accurate understanding displayed now a days, even by the most boorish criminals, of the state of the law and of all things that affect their individual offence.

Prisoners of a higher class sometimes adopted scarcely less curious methods for the preservation of their lives. Gahagan and Conner, condemned 'for diminishing the current coin of the realm,' about the same time as Young, composed poetical addresses, the one, To the Duchess of Queensberry, and the other, To His Royal Highness Prince George (afterwards King George III.), eldest son to Frederick, Prince of Wales, on his acting the part of Cato at Leicester House.

Hail, little Cato, taught to tread the stage
Awful as Cato of the Roman age;
How vast the hopes of thy maturer years,
When in the boy such manly power appears.

If ever flattery was excusable, it certainly was so in the case of this unhappy poet, about whose verses, nowhere absolutely contemptible, there is a real pathos at the conclusion. About to prophesy all sorts of glory to the future monarch, the author is overwhelmed by his own immediate wretchedness:

The captive Muse forbids the lays,
Unfit to stretch the merit I would praise.
Such at whose heels no galling shackles ring
May raise the voice and boldly touch the string;
But I, cramped hand and foot, in jail must stay,
Dreading each hour the execution day;
Nor will my Pegasus obey the rod,
With massy iron barbarously shod;
Thrice I essayed to force him up the height,
And thrice the painful gyves restrained his flight.

The same author also, while in jail, translated Pope's *Messiah* into Latin verse, and dedicated it to the then prime minister, the Duke of Newcastle. But neither Ancient nor Modern muse availed him. The only merciful Institution of those good old times was the Jail Fever.

These things are sad to read of, albeit the comparison of Now with Then should fill us with cheerful joy—and all but the morbid are glad to escape from them. It will be the aim of the present writer to confine his future chapters, as much as possible, to the more curious Leaves of these dark Annals; to narrations of mystery, of humour, and of pathos, leaving 'the triple tree' and its sad fruit untouched. No chronological order will be preserved in the narrations; but in order to start with dignity, I propose to commence with a couple of historical inquiries in one chapter—'Who killed Charles I.? And was his royal body hung in chains at Tyburn?'

STARVING THE EARTH.

EVERY seven years, we are told, the human body is renewed; every particle of which it was composed at the beginning of that period will have disappeared before the end of it, and fresh matter will have been drawn from earth, air, and water to supply the void. So with the sea; it is continually ascending to the clouds in vapour, and descending in rain. The earth itself is subject to the same conditions, is constantly decaying, and must constantly be repaired. Like the pelican of the classic legend, it has to feed its offspring with its own body—vegetation of all kinds is perpetually preying on its vitals, and robbing it of its most material essences. But when vegetation takes its natural course, it returns to the soil, in its decay,

* The site of the famous 'Tree' is now occupied by a house in Connaught Square.

as much as it withdrew when it sprang into existence, and thus a new crop is able to find sustenance in the ashes of the old one.

The agriculture of man, however, as pursued in these latter days, is of a pernicious character, for it takes away, while it does not replace; it stimulates the rapidity with which the earth can bring forth fruit only at the expense of its powers of endurance. In short, it is the story over again of the goose and the golden eggs, of the *peau de chagrin*, which conferred on the possessor present prosperity at the cost of so many years deducted from existence by every wish fulfilled. We get immense harvests now a days, but a high authority has just announced that the vegetable mould, upon which the permanent fertility of the land depends, is rapidly being used up. We are exacting too much from the earth, and starving it at the same time, for we deny it a proper amount of that pabulum which results from the growth of plants that take a lengthened possession of the soil, and that bequeath it a good legacy of refuse matter. Already, we are told, in the eastern states of North America, from the state of Maine to Florida, in Lower Germany, west of the Vistula, and in many parts of Spain and France, the vegetable mould is much exhausted, and no means are taken to prevent ultimate sterility. Moreover, in Northern Africa, and in many parts of Western and Central Asia, where man, in former times, destroyed the forest cover, and wasted the natural mould, the country has become arid desert, and animal and vegetable life have been extinguished. To make matters still worse, this deterioration of the soil has produced an evil effect on the atmosphere, from which there is no longer vegetation to draw down moisture; thus the mists vanish, the dew ceases, the rain fails, and the rivers are dried up. All this is, of course, very dreadful. The only question is, whether it is true?

There is, it is certain, too much reason to fear that our farmers have been indulging rather too freely in the use of artificial manures. Ever since the end of the last century, immense quantities of bones have been imported into Great Britain. To furnish this supply, the battle-fields of Leipsic, Waterloo, and the Crimea, have been raked up, and the catacombs of Sicily cleared of the bones of many generations. About 4,000,000 tons of phosphates, in the form of bones, linseed cakes, rapeseed, &c., and nearly 300,000 tons of guano, are annually imported into England, in order to be applied to the soil. Now, these manures quicken the fertility of the soil, and produce luxuriant crops; but every rich harvest thus raised involves so many years of subsequent sterility. It has been said, that he who makes two blades of grain grow where only one grew before, is a public benefactor; but the case is clearly changed when the consequence of producing two blades in one season is to incapacitate the soil from yielding even a single blade a few years afterwards. It is a delusion to suppose that a dose of artificial manure permanently strengthens the soil. As it has been well said, one might as well expect to grow strong on brandy and malt liquor, as to give real substance to the earth by a mere chemical dram. Or, to take a closer illustration: what the farmers have been doing in regard to the soil, is as absurd as trying to nourish a man on chemical preparations instead of ordinary food. It is quite true, that we eat flesh for the sake of the iron, and bread for the sake of the lime, which it contains; but it would be madness to forswear steaks and loaves, and swallow the iron and the lime in the shape of drugs. This is what the agriculturists have done to the earth; they have dosed it with phosphates, when it wanted natural manure—the sewage of towns, the refuse of the byre and the fold, and above all, the remains of its own crops. Wherever vegetation maintains a permanent footing, it leaves in the annual fall and decay of parts a certain

amount of matter which adds increased powers of production. Thus the earth gets back a large proportion of what it gave, with the addition of certain valuable elements extracted by the vegetation from the atmosphere. This is its proper food, 'cooked by nature in the most digestible manner possible,' and no amount of chemical stimulants will supply the want of it. Hence our farmers must not be too exacting in their demands on the earth; they must be content with a less rapid succession of crops, and must more frequently return to the soil a portion of its produce. Pasturage is one of the best means of renovating the energies of the land. By the growth of clover and turnips, and their consumption by sheep on the land, the vegetable mould may be not only increased, but improved. It should never be forgotten, that although the laboratory of the chemist may do much for the sick, the laboratory of nature is best for the sound.

A recent writer, in calling attention to the recklessness with which man has overtaken the earth, has expressed a doubt whether any effectual remedy can be found short of the 'repairing agency of nature,' by which regions may be consigned back to the beech and pine, continents submerged for fresh deposits of oceanic sediment, and volcanoes called into operation by land and under the sea. This, however, is rather too gloomy a view of matters. Our agriculturists have apparently, in their eagerness for a short-cut, been misled into a dangerous road, but they have not yet gone too far to return to the safe old highway. If they will only give the earth a little less physic, and a little more food, all may yet be well.

THE MILLER'S MEADOW.

THE swan loves the brook in the Ten-acre Meadow,
Sailing so lordly, so wanton and lordly,
Where the green dragon-fly, jewelled so gaily,
Flits round the mill in the Ten-acre Meadow.

The swallows race by in the Ten-acre Meadow,
Their shadows pursuing, in circles renewing,
Flying as swift as though hawks were pursuing,
Round the broad reach of the Ten-acre Meadow.

The pike loves the dam in the Ten-acre Meadow,
Chasing with fury, like Herod of Jewry,
The innocent dace who are flying his fury,
Troubling the dam in the Ten-acre Meadow.

I love the walk in the Ten-acre Meadow,
So golden with spring-flowers, with spring-flowers so golden,

For there I meet Katy, the miller's own darling,
And there in her fond arms I often am folden.

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